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REMARK

Claims 1-15 are pending in the application. Applicants amend the specification for a minor correction, and amend 1-2, 7, 13, and 15 for clarification. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a) for not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Applicants respectfully submit that all of the features specified in the claims are shown in the drawings.

Elements 1-11 and 1-12 in Fig. 1 illustrate exemplary structural embodiments of the "path specification means" and "path connection means" features recited in claim 1, respectively. And element 2-11 in Fig. 2 illustrates another exemplary embodiment of these features.

Element 5-11 in Fig. 5 illustrates an exemplary embodiment of the "setting means" feature recited in claim 3. Applicants refer to the corresponding description in the specification for a detailed description of this embodiment.

Figs. 6 and 7 show exemplary embodiments of the "labeling means" and "transfer means" features recited in claim 4. Elements 6-11 and 7-11 in these figures each illustrate a structural embodiment of these features.

Figs. 14A and 14B together illustrate an exemplary structural embodiment of the "selecting means" feature recited in claim 6. Figs. 15A and 15B together illustrate an exemplary embodiment of the "assigning means" feature recited in claim 7. Fig. 11 illustrates an embodiment of the "extracting means" feature recited in claim 13. And Fig. 8 demonstrates an implementation—in view of the structure illustrated in Figs. 23A-C of the "switching means" feature recited in claim 14.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the drawings show every feature specified in the claims, and respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection.

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Claims 1-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention.

Applicants amend claims 1, 2, 7, 13, and 15 to clarify the claim language and to cure the insufficient antecedent basis in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. Applicants refer to Figs. 15A, 15B, and their corresponding description in the specification for an exemplary embodiment of the claimed "allocated label number management side" feature recited in claim 7.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the § 112, ¶ 2 rejection.

Claims 1-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 6,016,319 to Kshiragar et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The cited portions of Kshiragar et al. only include description of ATM switching. Therefore, such portions of Kshiragar et al. do not include any disclosure of connecting layer 1 connection paths, let alone such connecting using layer 2 link information. Applicants refer to Fig. 2 of the application for an exemplary embodiment of the claimed invention. As shown in Fig. 2, the claimed invention provides for connecting a PVC path connected with a user-side device to a PVC (or SVC) path among multiple specified connection destinations—for example, PVC paths to NSP-A and NSP-B. Again, the cited portions of Kshiragar et al. only include description of ATM switching, and do not include any disclosure of the claimed layer 1 path connection feature.

In other words, Kshiragar et al., as cited and relied upon by the Examiner, fail to disclose,

“[a] layer 2 link handler provided in a network-side device, the network-side device connected with a user-side device by a permanent virtual connection path of layer 1, wherein said user-side device is made to connect to one among multiple specified connection destinations via one of permanent virtual connection

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paths of layer 1 or switched virtual connection paths of layer 1, the layer 2 link handler comprising:

a path specification means that specifies one path of a connection request destination from layer 2 link information that is emitted from the user-side device at the time of a layer 2 link connection request; and

a path connection means that causes said permanent virtual connection path of layer 1 connected between said network-side device and the user-side device to connect to the one specified path of the connection request destination," as recited in claim 1.  
(Emphasis added)

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, together with claims 2-14 dependent therefrom, is patentable over Kshiragar et al. for at least the above-stated reasons. Claim 15 incorporates features that correspond to those of claim 1 cited above, and is, therefore, patentable over Kshiragar et al. for at least the same reasons.

The above statements on the disclosure in the cited reference represent the present opinions of the undersigned attorney. The Examiner is respectfully requested to specifically indicate those portions of the reference that provide the basis for a view contrary to any of the above-stated opinions.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's implicit finding that the additional references made of record, but not applied, do not render the claims of the present application unpatentable, whether these references are considered alone or in combination with others.

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

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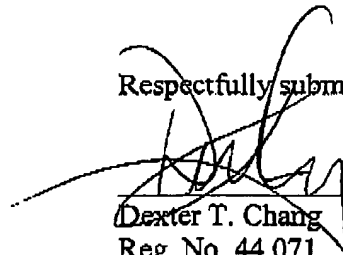
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Respectfully submitted,

  
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Docket No.: FUJ 17.433 (100794-11493)  
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